

HILBERT COEFFICIENTS OF PARAMETER IDEALS

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ABSTRACT. We consider the non-positivity of the Hilbert coefficients for a parameter ideal of a commutative Noetherian local ring. In particular, we show that the second Hilbert coefficient of a parameter ideal of depth at least $d - 1$ is always non-positive and give a condition for the coefficient to be zero. With the added condition that the depth of the associated graded ring is also at least $d - 1$ we show $e_i(q) \leq 0$ for $i = 1, \dots, d$.

1. INTRODUCTION

Let (R, \mathfrak{m}) be a Noetherian local ring, $I \subseteq R$ an \mathfrak{m} -primary ideal and M a finitely generated R -module. We let $\lambda_R(-)$ denote the length of an R -module. The *Hilbert function* for I with respect to M is the function $H_{I,M} : \mathbb{Z} \rightarrow \mathbb{Z}$ given by $H_{I,M}(n) = \lambda_R(M/I^n M)$. Samuel showed that these functions agree with a polynomial $P_{I,M}(n)$ (called the *Hilbert-Samuel polynomial*) of degree $d = \dim M$ for n sufficiently large. We can always write $P_{I,M}(n)$ in the form

$$P_{I,M}(n) = \sum_{i=0}^d (-1)^i e_i(I, M) \binom{n + d - i - 1}{d - i}$$

for unique numbers $e_i(I, M)$, known as the *Hilbert coefficients* for I with respect to M . The largest number for which $H_{I,M}(n)$ and $P_{I,M}(n)$ disagree is called the *postulation number* for I , denoted $n(I, M) := \min\{j \mid H_{I,M}(n) = P_{I,M}(n) \forall n > j\}$. Whenever $M = R$ we often suppress the M .

In this note, we focus our attention on non-positivity of the Hilbert coefficients for a parameter ideal. Recall that a ring R is *unmixed* if $\dim \widehat{R}/p = \dim R$ for all $p \in \text{Ass}_{\widehat{R}} \widehat{R}$ where \widehat{R} denotes the \mathfrak{m} -adic completion of R . Our work was inspired by the following result of Ghezzi, et al [2] which characterizes the Cohen-Macaulayness of a ring in terms of the first

Date: February 9, 2012.

2000 Mathematics Subject Classification. Primary 13D40.

Key words and phrases. Hilbert-Samuel polynomial, Hilbert coefficients.

Hilbert coefficient of a parameter ideal. By a parameter ideal, we mean an ideal generated by a full system of parameters.

Theorem 1.1. [2] *Suppose (R, \mathfrak{m}) is an unmixed local ring and q a parameter ideal. Then $e_1(q) \leq 0$ with equality if and only if R is Cohen-Macaulay.*

With the assumption that $\text{depth } R \geq d - 1$, we are able to prove the following:

Theorem 1.2. *Let (R, \mathfrak{m}) be a local Noetherian ring of dimension $d \geq 2$. Suppose that $\text{depth } R \geq d - 1$. If q is a parameter ideal of R , then the following hold:*

- (1) $e_2(q) \leq 0$
- (2) $e_2(q) = 0$ if and only if $n(q) < 2 - d$ and $\text{grade } gr_q(R)_+ \geq d - 1$
- (3) $e_2(q) = 0$ implies $e_3(q) = e_4(q) = \cdots = e_d(q) = 0$.

Here, $gr_q(R)$ denotes the associated graded ring of R with respect to q .

We also discuss some results with respect to the first difference function, Δ , defined in Section 4 and use this to examine the other Hilbert coefficients of a parameter ideal under the additional assumption that $\text{depth } gr_q(R) \geq d - 1$.

2. THE HILBERT COEFFICIENTS IN DIMENSION ONE

In this section we will discuss some results on the Hilbert coefficients of a parameter ideal in a one dimensional ring.

Definition 2.1. *Let $f : \mathbb{Z} \rightarrow \mathbb{Z}$. The first difference function, $\Delta(f)$, is defined by $\Delta(f(n)) = f(n+1) - f(n)$. We define the i^{th} difference function inductively by $\Delta^i(f) = \Delta(\Delta^{i-1}(f))$. By convention, we define $\Delta^0(f) = f$.*

We first give a formula for the Hilbert coefficients in a one-dimensional ring.

Proposition 2.2. *Suppose (R, \mathfrak{m}) is a one-dimensional local Noetherian ring and $q = (x) \subseteq R$ is a parameter ideal. Then $((x^{i+1}) : x^i) = ((x^{i+2}) : x^{i+1})$ for all $i \gg 0$. We set $l = \min\{i \mid ((x^{n+1}) : x^n) = ((x^{i+1}) : x^i) \text{ for all } n \geq i\}$ and $\tilde{x} = ((x^{l+1}) : x^l)$. Then*

- (1) (a) $e_0(q) = \lambda_R(R/\tilde{x})$, and
- (b) $e_1(q) = \sum_{i=0}^{l-1} (\lambda_R(R/\tilde{x}) - \lambda_R(R/((x^{i+1}) : x^i)))$ for a fixed integer l .

- (2) (a) $P_q(n) - H_q(n) = \sum_{i=n}^{\infty} (\lambda_R(R/((x^{i+1}) : x^i)) - \lambda(R/\tilde{x}))$, and
 (b) $P_q(n) \geq H_q(n)$ for all $n \geq 0$.

Proof. Write $q = (x)$. Note that $\lambda_R((x^i)/(x^{i+1})) = \lambda_R(R/((x^{i+1}) : x^i))$ for all i as $((x^{i+1}) : x^i)$ is the kernel of the surjective map $R \rightarrow (x^i)/(x^{i+1})$ defined by $1 \mapsto \bar{x}^i$. Then $\lambda(R/q^n) = \sum_{i=0}^{n-1} \lambda_R((x^i)/(x^{i+1})) = \sum_{i=0}^{n-1} \lambda_R(R/((x^{i+1}) : x^i))$. Note the ascending chain

$$((x) : x^0) \subseteq ((x^2) : x) \subseteq ((x^3) : x^2) \subseteq \cdots$$

must stabilize. Let

$$l = \min\{i \mid ((x^{n+1}) : x^n) = ((x^{i+1}) : x^i) \text{ for all } n \geq i\}$$

and set $\tilde{x} = ((x^{l+1}) : x^l)$.

For $n \geq l$, we have $\lambda_R(R/(x^n)) = \sum_{i=0}^{l-1} \lambda_R(R/((x^{i+1}) : x^i)) + (n-l)\lambda_R(R/\tilde{x})$. This gives that

$$P_q(n) = \sum_{i=0}^{l-1} \lambda_R(R/((x^{i+1}) : x^i)) + (n-l)\lambda_R(R/\tilde{x}).$$

From this, we see that $e_0(q) = \lambda_R(R/\tilde{x})$ and $e_1(q) = \sum_{i=0}^{l-1} [\lambda_R(R/\tilde{x}) - \lambda_R(R/((x^{i+1}) : x^i))]$.

This proves (1).

Now if $n \leq l-1$, then $H_q(n) = \sum_{i=0}^{n-1} \lambda_R(R/((x^{i+1}) : x^i))$, and

$$\begin{aligned} P_q(n) - H_q(n) &= \sum_{i=n}^{l-1} \lambda_R(R/((x^{i+1}) : x^i)) + (n-l)\lambda_R(R/\tilde{x}) \\ &= \sum_{i=n}^{l-1} (\lambda_R(R/((x^{i+1}) : x^i)) - \lambda_R(R/\tilde{x})) \\ &= \sum_{i=n}^{\infty} (\lambda_R(R/((x^{i+1}) : x^i)) - \lambda_R(R/\tilde{x})), \end{aligned}$$

where the last equality holds since $((x^{i+1}) : x^i) = \tilde{x}$ for all $i \geq l$. This gives 2(a).

Note that for all i , we have $((x^{i+1}) : x^i) \subset \tilde{x}$, so $\lambda_R(R/((x^{i+1}) : x^i)) \geq \lambda_R(R/\tilde{x})$ and we have $P_q(n) - H_q(n) \geq 0$. In fact, if $n \geq l$, we have $P_q(n) - H_q(n) = 0$. This gives part 2(b) of the proposition. \square

This proposition gives us a formula for the postulation number, $n(q)$, of a parameter ideal q in a one-dimensional ring.

Corollary 2.3. *Let (R, \mathfrak{m}) be a one-dimensional local Noetherian ring and $q = (x)$ a parameter ideal. Then*

$$n(q) = \min\{i \mid ((x^{i+1}) : x^i) = ((x^{j+1}) : x^j) \text{ for all } j \geq i\} - 1.$$

Proof. Let $l = \min\{i \mid ((x^{i+1}) : x^i) = ((x^{j+1}) : x^j) \text{ for all } j \geq i\}$ and $\tilde{x} = ((x^{l+1}) : x^l)$. Then, using part 2(a) of Proposition 2.2, clearly $n(q) \leq l - 1$. If $n(q) < l - 1$, then we have $P_q(l) = H_q(l)$ and using 2(a) again, this gives $\lambda_R(R/((x^l) : x^{l-1})) = \lambda_R(R/\tilde{x})$. But this contradicts the minimality of l . Thus, we must have $n(q) = l - 1$. \square

Corollary 2.4. *Let (R, \mathfrak{m}) be a one-dimensional local Noetherian ring and $q = (x)$ a parameter ideal. Then*

- (1) *For $k \in \mathbb{Z}$, if $P_q(k) - H_q(k) = 0$, then $P_q(n) - H_q(n) = 0$ for all $n \geq k$, i.e., $k > n(q)$.*
- (2) *$\Delta^2(P_q(n) - H_q(n)) = \lambda_R(((x^{n+2}) : x^{n+1}) / ((x^{n+1}) : x^n))$ for all n .*

Proof. For the first statement, suppose $P_q(k) - H_q(k) = 0$. Let \tilde{x} be defined as in Proposition 2.2. Then $P_q(k) - H_q(k) = \sum_{i=k}^{\infty} (\lambda_R(R/((x^{i+1}) : x^i)) - \lambda_R(R/\tilde{x})) = 0$. Since $\lambda_R(R/((x^{i+1}) : x^i)) - \lambda_R(R/\tilde{x}) \geq 0$ for all $i \geq 0$, we must have equality for each $i \geq k$. It follows that $P_q(n) - H_q(n) = 0$ for all $n \geq k$, i.e., $k > n(q)$.

For (2), note by Proposition 2.2

$$\Delta(P_q(n) - H_q(n)) = \lambda_R(R/\tilde{x}) - \lambda_R(R/((x^{n+1}) : x^n)).$$

So,

$$\begin{aligned} \Delta^2(P_q(n) - H_q(n)) &= \Delta(\Delta(P_q(n) - H_q(n))) \\ &= \Delta(\lambda_R(R/\tilde{x}) - \lambda_R(R/((x^{n+1}) : x^n))) \\ &= -\lambda_R(R/((x^{n+2}) : x^{n+1})) + \lambda_R(R/((x^{n+1}) : x^n)) \\ &= \lambda_R(((x^{n+2}) : x^{n+1}) / ((x^{n+1}) : x^n)). \end{aligned}$$

In particular, this shows $\Delta(P_q(n) - H_q(n)) \leq 0$ and $\Delta^2(P_q(n) - H_q(n)) \geq 0$ for all n . \square

3. THE SECOND HILBERT COEFFICIENT

When working with Hilbert functions, a common technique is to reduce by a superficial sequence to obtain a ring of smaller dimension. The following Proposition due to Nagata guarantees that when we do this, the Hilbert coefficients behave nicely.

Proposition 3.1 (cf. [9], 22.6). *Let (R, \mathfrak{m}) be a Noetherian local ring, I an \mathfrak{m} -primary ideal, and M a nonzero finitely generated R -module of dimension d . Suppose $y \in I$ is superficial with respect to M . Then $\lambda_R(0 :_M y)$ is finite and*

$$P_{\bar{I}, \bar{M}}(n) = P_{I, M}(n) - P_{I, M}(n-1) + \lambda_R(0 :_M y).$$

In particular, we have

$$e_i(\bar{I}, \bar{M}) = \begin{cases} e_i(I, M) & \text{for } i = 0, \dots, d-2 \\ e_{d-1}(I, M) + (-1)^{d-1} \lambda_R(0 :_M y) & \text{for } i = d-1. \end{cases}$$

If $x \in I \setminus I^2$ is a non-zero-divisor and x^* is a regular element of $gr_I(R)$, it can be easily shown that $n(I/(x)) = n(I) + 1$, so the postulation number also behaves nicely when we reduce via a superficial non-zero-divisor.

We begin with a formula for the last Hilbert coefficient.

Lemma 3.2. *Suppose (R, \mathfrak{m}) has dimension d . Let I be an \mathfrak{m} -primary ideal and $y \in I$ a superficial element. Let $\bar{I} = I/(y)$, $H_{\bar{I}}(k) = \lambda_R(R/(I^k, y))$ and $P_{\bar{I}}(k)$ denote the Hilbert Samuel polynomial for \bar{I} . Then for $l \gg 0$,*

$$(-1)^d e_d(I) = \sum_{k=1}^l (H_{\bar{I}}(k) - P_{\bar{I}}(k)) - \sum_{k=1}^l \lambda_R((I^k : y)/I^{k-1}) + l \lambda_R(0 : y).$$

Furthermore, if y is also a non-zero-divisor on R , we have

$$(-1)^d e_d(I) = \sum_{k=1}^{\infty} (H_{\bar{I}}(k) - P_{\bar{I}}(k)) - \sum_{k=1}^{\infty} \lambda_R((I^k : y)/I^{k-1}).$$

Proof. For $k \in \mathbb{Z}$, consider the exact sequence:

$$0 \rightarrow \frac{I^k : y}{I^{k-1}} \rightarrow R/I^{k-1} \xrightarrow{y} R/I^k \rightarrow R/(I^k, y) \rightarrow 0.$$

From this we see that $\lambda_R(R/(y, I^k)) = \lambda_R(R/I^k) - \lambda_R(R/I^{k-1}) + \lambda_R\left(\frac{I^k : y}{I^{k-1}}\right)$. Subtracting $P_{\bar{I}}(k)$ and summing both sides, we get, for $l \gg 0$,

$$\sum_{k=1}^l \left(\lambda(R/(y, I^k)) - P_{\bar{I}}(k) \right) = \sum_{k=1}^l \left(\lambda(R/I^k) - \lambda(R/I^{k-1}) + \lambda\left(\frac{I^k : y}{I^{k-1}}\right) - P_{\bar{I}}(k) \right).$$

Thus,

$$\begin{aligned} \sum_{k=1}^l (H_{\bar{I}}(k) - P_{\bar{I}}(k)) &= \lambda(R/I^l) - \sum_{k=1}^l \sum_{i=0}^{d-1} (-1)^i \binom{k+d-2-i}{d-1-i} e_i(\bar{I}) + \sum_{k=1}^l \lambda\left(\frac{I^k : y}{I^{k-1}}\right) \\ &= \sum_{i=0}^d (-1)^i \binom{l+d-1-i}{d-i} e_i(I) - \sum_{i=0}^{d-1} (-1)^i \binom{l+d-1-i}{d-i} e_i(\bar{I}) \\ &\quad + \sum_{k=1}^l \lambda\left(\frac{I^k : y}{I^{k-1}}\right) \end{aligned}$$

where $\lambda(-) = \lambda_R(-)$.

By Proposition 3.1, we have $e_i(I) = e_i(\bar{I})$ for $i = 0, \dots, d-2$ and $e_{d-1}(I) = e_{d-1}(\bar{I}) - (-1)^{d-1} \lambda_R(0 : y)$. Hence,

$$\sum_{k=1}^l (H_{\bar{I}}(k) - P_{\bar{I}}(k)) = -l \lambda_R(0 : y) + (-1)^d e_d(I) + \sum_{k=1}^l \lambda_R((I^k : y)/I^{k-1}).$$

Rearranging, we get

$$(-1)^d e_d(I) = \sum_{k=1}^l (H_{\bar{I}}(k) - P_{\bar{I}}(k)) - \sum_{k=1}^l \lambda_R((I^k : y)/I^{k-1}) + l \lambda_R(0 : y)$$

and if y is also a non-zero-divisor on R , we have

$$(-1)^d e_d(I) = \sum_{k=1}^{\infty} (H_{\bar{I}}(k) - P_{\bar{I}}(k)) - \sum_{k=1}^{\infty} \lambda_R((I^k : y)/I^{k-1})$$

since for $k \gg 0$, $H_{\bar{I}}(k) - P_{\bar{I}}(k) = 0$ and $\lambda_R((I^k : y)/I^{k-1}) = 0$. □

We define $\text{grade } gr_I(R)_+$ to be the maximal length of a regular sequence for $gr_I(R)$ contained in $gr_I(R)_+$. Then $\text{grade } gr_I(R)_+ = \text{depth } gr_I(R)$. For $x \in I^n \setminus I^{n+1}$ let x^* denote its image in $I^n/I^{n+1} \subseteq gr_I(R)$. The grade of the associated graded ring also behaves nicely with respect to superficial sequences as evidenced by the following lemmas. Lemma 3.4 is also known as ‘‘Sally’s Machine’’.

Lemma 3.3. [4, Lemma 2.1] *Let x_1, \dots, x_k be a superficial sequence for I . If $\text{grade } gr_I(R)_+ \geq k$, then x_1^*, \dots, x_k^* is a regular sequence.*

Lemma 3.4. [4, Lemma 2.2] *Suppose y_1, \dots, y_k is a superficial sequence for an ideal I . Let \bar{R} and \bar{I} denote $R/(y_1, \dots, y_k)$ and $I/(y_1, \dots, y_k)$, respectively. If $\text{grade } gr_{\bar{I}}(\bar{R})_+ \geq 1$, then $\text{grade } gr_I(R)_+ \geq k + 1$.*

We now consider the second Hilbert coefficient, $e_2(q)$ for a parameter ideal q .

Theorem 3.5. *Suppose (R, \mathfrak{m}) is a Noetherian local ring of dimension $d \geq 2$ and $\text{depth } R \geq d - 1$. Let $q \subseteq R$ be a parameter ideal. Then*

- (1) $e_2(q) \leq 0$.
- (2) $e_2(q) = 0$ if and only if $n(q) < 2 - d$ and $\text{depth } gr_q(R) \geq d - 1$.
- (3) $e_2(q) = 0$ implies $e_3(q) = \dots = e_d(q) = 0$.

Proof. We may assume that R has infinite residue field by passing to $R[x]_{\mathfrak{m}R[x]}$ if necessary. We will proceed by induction on $d = \dim R$. First suppose $d = 2$. Let $q = (y, x)$ where $y \in q \setminus \mathfrak{m}q$ is a superficial non-zero-divisor for R . Let $(\bar{\cdot})$ denote working modulo (y) . Now, \bar{q} is a parameter ideal in the one-dimensional ring \bar{R} , so by Proposition 2.2, $H_{\bar{q}}(k) - P_{\bar{q}}(k) \leq 0$ for all $k \geq 0$. In particular, Lemma 3.2 gives

$$\begin{aligned} e_2(q) &= \sum_{k=1}^{\infty} (H_{\bar{q}}(k) - P_{\bar{q}}(k)) - \sum_{k=1}^{\infty} \lambda_R((q^k : y)/q^{k-1}) \\ &\leq 0. \end{aligned}$$

Note that if the left-hand side of the equation above is zero, we must have that $\lambda_R((q^k : y)/q^{k-1}) = 0$ and $P_{\bar{q}}(k) = H_{\bar{q}}(k)$ for all $k \geq 1$. In particular, the condition $\lambda_R((q^k : y)/q^{k-1}) = 0$ for all $k \geq 1$ implies that y^* is a non-zero-divisor in $gr_q(R)$, so $\text{depth } gr_q(R) \geq 1$. Now, since y^* is a non-zero-divisor, $n(\bar{q}) = n(q) + 1$; i.e., $n(q) < 0$. This proves the Corollary when $d = 2$.

Now if $\dim R > 2$, then let $y_1, \dots, y_{d-2} \in q \setminus \mathfrak{m}q$ be a superficial sequence of non-zero-divisors for R . Then $\bar{q} = q/(y_1, \dots, y_{d-2})$ is a parameter ideal in the two-dimensional ring $\bar{R} = R/(y_1, \dots, y_{d-2})$ which has $\text{depth } \bar{R} \geq 1$. Hence, by induction, we have $e_2(q) = e_2(\bar{q}) \leq 0$.

For (2), first suppose $e_2(q) = 0$. Then by induction $\text{grade } gr_{\bar{q}}(\bar{R})_+ \geq 1$. By Lemma 3.4, this implies $\text{grade } gr_q(R)_+ \geq d - 2 + 1 = d - 1$. Finally, this gives y_1^*, \dots, y_{d-2}^* is a regular sequence by Lemma 3.3. Hence, $n(\bar{q}) < 0$ if and only if $n(q) < 2 - d$. This gives the forward implications for (2).

For the backward implication of (2), suppose $n(q) < 2 - d$ (i.e., $H_q(n) = P_q(n)$ for all $n \geq 2 - d$) and $\text{grade } gr_q(R)_+ \geq d - 1$. Then $P_q(n) = 0$ for all $2 - d \leq n \leq 0$. Plugging the values $0, -1, -2, \dots, 2 - d$ successively into $P_q(n)$, one can see that we get $e_d(q) = e_{d-1}(q) = \dots = e_2(q) = 0$.

Finally, (3) follows from the proof of (2). \square

Corollary 3.6. *Suppose (R, \mathfrak{m}) is a local Noetherian ring of dimension $d \geq 2$ and $\text{depth } R \geq d - 1$. Then for any parameter ideal $q \subseteq R$, we have*

$$\lambda_R(R/q) \leq e_0(q) - e_1(q).$$

Proof. As before, we may assume that R/\mathfrak{m} is infinite. From Proposition 2.2, we have that $H_{\bar{q}}(n) \leq P_{\bar{q}}(n)$ for all $n \geq 1$, where $\bar{q} = q/(y_1, \dots, y_{d-1})$ for $y_1, \dots, y_{d-1} \in q$ a superficial sequence which is part of a minimal generating set for q . Note that we may also choose y_1, \dots, y_{d-1} to be a regular sequence as $\text{depth } R \geq d - 1$. Now, letting $n = 1$ and using the fact that $e_i(q) = e_i(\bar{q})$ for $i = 0, 1$ since y_1, \dots, y_{d-1} is a superficial and regular sequence, the result follows. \square

The assumption that $\text{depth } R \geq d - 1$ is necessary in Theorem 3.5, as evidenced by the following example. We use Macaulay2 [7] to compute the example.

Example 3.7. *Let $R = k[x, y, z, u, v, w]/I$ where I is the intersection of ideals $I = (x + y, z - u, w) \cap (z, u - v, y) \cap (x, u, w)$ and $q = (u - y, z + w, x - v)$. Then R is an unmixed ring of dimension three and depth one and q is a parameter ideal with*

$$P_q(n) = 3 \binom{n+2}{3} + 2 \binom{n+1}{2} + n.$$

In particular, $e_2(q) = 1 > 0$.

Note that in the example above, one could mod out the ring R by a superficial non-zero-divisor in $q \setminus \mathfrak{m}_q$ to obtain an example of a two-dimensional ring \bar{R} of depth zero with parameter ideal \bar{q} satisfying $e_2(\bar{q}) = 1 > 0$.

The upper bound for $e_2(q)$ in Theorem 3.5 can be achieved even if R is not Cohen-Macaulay. We also provide an example below with negative second Hilbert coefficient. In both examples, we use the software system Macaulay2 [7] to compute the Hilbert-Samuel functions.

Example 3.8. Let $R = k[[x^5, xy^4, x^4y, y^5]] \cong k[[t_1, t_2, t_3, t_4]]/J$ where J is the ideal $J = (t_2t_3 - t_1t_4, t_2^4 - t_3t_4^3, t_1t_2^3 - t_3^2t_4^2, t_1^2t_2^2 - t_3^3t_4, t_1^3t_2 - t_3^4, t_3^5 - t_1^4t_4)$. Then R is a two-dimensional complete domain with depth one. The parameter ideal $q = (x^5, y^5)$ has Hilbert-Samuel polynomial

$$P_q(n) = 5 \binom{n+1}{2} + 2n,$$

so $e_2(q) = 0$.

Example 3.9. Let $R = k[x, y, z, t]/((x^2, z^4) \cap (x - y, z + t))$. Then R is a two-dimensional unmixed ring with depth one. The ideal $q = (x + t + y, z - y)$ is a parameter ideal with Hilbert-Samuel polynomial

$$P_q(n) = 9 \binom{n+1}{2} + 2 \binom{n}{1} - 1.$$

Hence, $e_2(q) = -1 < 0$. In this example, we have that $n(q) = 0$; that is, $P_q(0) \neq H_q(0)$ and $P_q(n) = H_q(n)$ for all $n \geq 1$. However, we do have that $\text{depth } gr_q(R) \geq 1$.

4. THE HIGHER HILBERT COEFFICIENTS

In our first theorem of this section we use techniques similar to those of Marley to obtain a result reminiscent of Theorem 1 in [6].

Theorem 4.1. Let (R, \mathfrak{m}) be a local Noetherian ring of dimension d and suppose q is a parameter ideal for R satisfying $\text{depth } gr_q(R) \geq d - 1$. Then for $0 \leq i \leq d + 1$ and $n \in \mathbb{Z}$,

$$(-1)^i \Delta^{d+1-i}(P_q(n) - H_q(n)) \geq 0.$$

Proof. We first note that it is enough to prove the result when $i = 0$. Indeed, suppose $g : \mathbb{Z} \rightarrow \mathbb{Z}$ satisfies $g(n) = 0$ for all n sufficiently large and $\Delta(g(n)) \geq 0$ for all n . Then we claim $g(n) \leq 0$ for all n . Let N be such that $g(n) = 0$ for all $n \geq N$. Then $\Delta(g(N-1)) = g(N) - g(N-1) \geq 0$ implies $g(N-1) \leq 0$. Inductively, one can show that $g(j) \leq 0$ for all j . In particular, if we set $g(n) = P_q(n) - H_q(n)$, and assume $(-1)^i \Delta^{d+1-i}(g(n)) \geq 0$ for all n , then $(-1)^i \Delta^{d+1-i-1}(g(n)) \leq 0$ gives the theorem for $i+1$. Hence, it is enough to prove

$$\Delta^{d+1}(P_q(n) - H_q(n)) \geq 0 \quad \text{for all } n.$$

We will use induction on the dimension d . Note the case $d = 1$ is proved in Corollary 2.4. Suppose $d > 1$. Let $a \in q \setminus \mathfrak{m}_q$ such that a^* is a $gr_q(R)$ -regular element. Let $\bar{q} = q/(a)$ and $\bar{R} = R/(a)$. Then note that $\text{depth}_{\bar{q}}(\bar{R}) \geq d-2$ and \bar{q} is a parameter ideal for the $(d-1)$ -dimensional ring \bar{R} . So, by induction,

$$\Delta^d(P_{\bar{q}}(n) - H_{\bar{q}}(n)) \geq 0 \quad \text{for all } n.$$

Now, as a^* is a non-zero-divisor in $gr_q(R)$, we have $H_{\bar{q}}(n) = H_q(n) - H_q(n-1)$ for all n . Similarly, $P_{\bar{q}}(n) = P_q(n) - P_q(n-1)$. Hence,

$$\begin{aligned} \Delta^{d+1}(P_q(n) - H_q(n)) &= \Delta^d(\Delta(P_q(n) - H_q(n))) \\ &= \Delta^d(P_{\bar{q}}(n+1) - H_{\bar{q}}(n+1)) \\ &\geq 0 \quad \text{for all } n. \end{aligned}$$

Thus,

$$\Delta^{d+1}(P_q(n) - H_q(n)) \geq 0 \quad \text{for all } n. \quad \square$$

Corollary 4.2. *Let (R, \mathfrak{m}) be a local Noetherian ring of dimension d and suppose q is a parameter ideal for R satisfying $\text{depth } gr_q(R) \geq d-1$. Suppose $P_q(k) - H_q(k) = 0$ for some k . Then $P_q(n) - H_q(n) = 0$ for all $n \geq k$, i.e., $k > n(q)$.*

Proof. Letting $i = d$ in Theorem 4.1, we have $(-1)^d \Delta(P_q(n) - H_q(n)) \geq 0$ for all n . This gives $(-1)^d(P_q(n+1) - H_q(n+1)) \geq (-1)^d(P_q(n) - H_q(n))$ for all n . In particular, we have

$$0 = (-1)^d(P_q(k) - H_q(k)) \leq (-1)^d(P_q(n) - H_q(n)) \leq 0 \quad \forall n \geq k$$

where the last inequality holds because $P_q(N) - H_q(N) = 0$ for $N \gg 0$. Thus, $P_q(n) = H_q(n)$ for all $n \geq k$. \square

Remark 4.3. Let (R, \mathfrak{m}) be a local Noetherian ring of dimension d and suppose q is a parameter ideal for R . For $0 \leq i \leq d-1$, we have the following:

- (1) If $n(q) < i - d$, then $e_j(q) = 0$ for $j \geq i$.
- (2) If $\text{depth } gr_q(R) \geq d - 1$, the converse to (1) holds.

Proof. Note (1) follows by using the fact that $P_q(j) = 0$ for $i - d < j < 0$. For (2), suppose $\text{depth } gr_q(R) \geq d - 1$ and $e_i(q) = 0$ for $j \geq i$. Then $P_q(i - d) = 0 = H_q(i - d)$ and by Corollary 4.2, $n(q) < i - d$. \square

Question 4.4. Does the converse to part (1) of Remark 4.3 above hold in general?

Corollary 4.5. Let (R, \mathfrak{m}) be a local Noetherian ring of dimension d and suppose q is a parameter ideal for R satisfying $\text{depth } gr_q(R) \geq d - 1$. Then for $1 \leq i \leq d$

- (1) $e_i(q) \leq 0$.
- (2) $(-1)^{j+1}(e_0(q) - e_1(q) + \cdots + (-1)^j e_j(q) - \lambda_R(R/q)) \geq 0$ for $j = 1, \dots, d$.

Proof. Note that it is enough to prove (1) in the case $i = d$, as we can then use reduction by a superficial sequence to obtain $e_i(q) \leq 0$ for $i = 1, \dots, d - 1$. Letting $i = d + 1$ in Theorem 4.1, we have

$$(4.1) \quad (-1)^{d+1}(P_q(n) - H_q(n)) \geq 0 \quad \text{for all } n.$$

If $n = 0$, $(-1)^{d+1}((-1)^d e_d(q) - H_q(0)) \geq 0$ implies $-e_d(q) \geq 0$; that is, $e_d(q) \leq 0$.

For (2), we will first prove the case $j = \dim R = d$. Indeed, letting $n = 1$ in equation (4.1), we see

$$(-1)^{d+1}(e_0(q) - e_1(q) + \cdots + (-1)^d e_d - \lambda_R(R/q)) \geq 0.$$

Now, let $a_1, \dots, a_{d-j} \in q \setminus q^2$ be part of a minimal generating set for q such that a_1^*, \dots, a_{d-j}^* is a $gr_q(R)$ -regular sequence. Then, setting $\bar{R} = R/(a_1, \dots, a_{d-j})$ and $\bar{q} = q/(a_1, \dots, a_{d-j})$ we have \bar{q} is a parameter ideal in the j -dimensional ring \bar{R} , and $\text{depth } gr_{\bar{q}}(\bar{R}) \geq j - 1$. Finally,

$\lambda_R(R/q) = \lambda_{\bar{R}}(\bar{R}/\bar{q})$ and since a_1, \dots, a_{d-j} defines a superficial regular sequence in R , we have $e_i(\bar{q}) = e_i(q)$ for all $i = 0, \dots, j$. It follows that

$$(-1)^{j+1}(e_0(q) - e_1(q) + \dots + (-1)^j e_j(q) - \lambda_R(R/q)) \geq 0. \quad \square$$

Corollary 4.6. *Let (R, \mathfrak{m}) be a local Noetherian ring of dimension d and suppose q is a parameter ideal for R satisfying $\text{depth} gr_q(R) \geq d - 1$. Suppose $e_i(q) = 0$ for some $1 \leq i \leq d - 1$. Then $e_j(q) = 0$ for $i \leq j \leq d$.*

Proof. Note that it is enough to prove that $e_{i+1}(q) = 0$. Reducing by a superficial sequence if necessary, we may assume that $i = d - 1$. Since $e_0(q) > 0$, we must have that $d > 1$, so by assumption, $\text{depth} gr_q(R) > 0$. Let $a \in q$ be such that $a^* \in gr_q(R)$ is a non-zero-divisor. Then $e_{d-1}(\bar{q}) = e_{d-1}(q) = 0$ implies that $P_{\bar{q}}(0) = 0 = H_{\bar{q}}(0)$. Now, by Corollary 4.2, $n(\bar{q}) \leq -1$. As $n(\bar{q}) = n(q) + 1$, this gives $n(q) \leq -2$, and in particular, $(-1)^d e_d(q) = P_q(0) = H_q(0) = 0$. \square

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The work in this paper was done in preparation for the author's dissertation and would not have been possible without the guidance, encouragement, and input from my advisor Tom Marley. The author is also grateful to Brian Harbourne and Luchezar Avramov for their feedback on this research.

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